

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for loading a load carrier with packing units forming a load stack, comprising:

handling and support means, by means of which a packing unit to be loaded is supported from below throughout the operation of loading from a feed device onto the load stack and which handling and support means are designed to deposit the packing unit at any selectable spatial position on the load stack, the handling and support means including:

a stationary loading plate and a displacement device for displacing the packing unit on the loading plate in an x-direction horizontally along the broad side of the load carrier, and wherein the feed device feeds the packing unit in each case individually on a tray provided with openings, and

means for lifting the packing unit from the tray.

2. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a lifting device for lifting and lowering the load carrier.

3. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a loading aid is provided for loading of the load carrier.

4. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 3, wherein ~~a~~ the loading aid encloses ~~at least one, preferably~~ three sides of the load stack.

5. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a load-carrier tilting device for tilting the load carrier ~~carriers~~ in order to load laterally enclosed load carriers.

6. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising a wrapping device for wrapping protective means around the fully stacked load stack in order to stabilize the load stack, while at the same time for removal of the loading aid either the load carrier is lifted relative to the loading aid or the loading aid ~~(60)~~ is lowered relative to the load carrier.

7-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 8 1, wherein the means for lifting a packing unit from the tray ~~comprise~~ comprises lifting pins for engagement through the tray openings.

10. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 9, comprising a displaceable rake for feeding a packing unit, which has been lifted by the lifting pins, onto the loading plate.

11. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 8 1, comprising a device for carrying away empty trays.

12-14. (Canceled)

15. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a movable scanning device for detecting the instantaneous height of the load stack.

16. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a load-carrier changing device for exchanging a loaded load carrier for an empty load carrier.

17. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a rotary apparatus for rotating fed trays through multiples of 90°.

18. (Currently Amended) Apparatus ~~according to claim 1,~~ for loading a load carrier with packing units forming a load stack, the apparatus comprising:

handling and support means, by means of which a packing unit to be loaded is supported from below throughout the operation of loading from a feed device onto the load stack and which handling and support means are designed to deposit the packing unit at any selectable spatial position on the load stack, the handling and support means including means for lifting a packing unit from a tray, and

a tray-vibrating device for defined positioning of a the packing unit on the tray.

19. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a packing-unit tilting device for tilting a packing unit and for depositing the tilted packing unit on the tray.

20. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a sorting device for sorting ~~the~~ packing units that are fed to the loading apparatus.

21-34. (Canceled)

35. (New) An apparatus for loading a load carrier with packing units forming a load stack, the apparatus comprising:

handling and support means, by means of which a packing unit to be loaded is supported from below throughout the operation of loading from a feed device onto the load stack and which handling and support means are designed to deposit the packing unit at any selectable spatial position on the load stack, wherein the handling and support means includes:

a stationary loading plate and a displacement device for displacing a packing unit on the loading plate in a an x-direction horizontally along the broad side of the load carrier,

a loading tongue for acting upon a packing unit on the loading plate and for displacing the packing unit in a z-direction of the loading depth of the load carrier, and

a scraper disposed above the loading tongue and movable independently of the loading tongue in the z-direction in order to retain the packing unit at the desired position on the load stack, wherein loading tongue and scraper are designed so as to be movable simultaneously in the x-direction.

36. (New) The apparatus of claim 35 further comprising a lifting device for lifting and lowering the load carrier.

37. (New) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein a loading aid is provided for loading of the load carrier.

38. (New) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the loading aid encloses three sides of the load stack.

39. (New) The apparatus of claim 35 further comprising a load-carrier tilting device for tilting the load-carrier in order to load laterally enclosed load carriers.

40. (New) The apparatus of claim 37 further comprising a wrapping device for wrapping protective means around the fully stacked load stack in order to stabilize the load stack, where at the same time for removal of the loading aid either the load carrier is lifted relative to the loading aid or the loading aid is lowered relative to the load carrier.

41. (New) The apparatus of claim 35 further comprising a movable scanning device for detecting the instantaneous height of the load stack.

42. (New) The apparatus of claim 35 further comprising a load-carrier changing device for exchanging a loaded load carrier for an empty load carrier.

43. (New) The apparatus of claim 35 further comprising a sorting device for sorting packing units fed to the loading apparatus.